

## **Achieving post Divorce Safety**

### **Symposium Third World Conference on Women's Shelters**

*Marianne Hester, Corine de Ruiter & Sietske Dijkstra, The Hague, November 5 th 2015*

**What is needed and why?:** See the enclosed wrap up of the audience

**Slides:** available on the website

**Cases:** brother in law who divorced and could not see his children

Shelterworkers (2): one woman without economic resources went back to her husband; another stayed in the shelter and built up a life on her own

**Masks:** sabotage, best interest of the child, parental alienation, high conflict divorce ('fighting divorce'), failure to protect, the worried mother, the toxic trio (psychiatry, addiction and violence)

**Analysis:** planets, absent presence (Thiara and Humphreys, 2015) : "it is like a mask that sticks to your face and makes you hide your experience, and the thoughts and feelings about".

#### **Observations, remarks and conclusions:**

1. Internationally there are no systematic data on children dying in a high conflict divorce situation
2. There is a lack of objective knowledge on high conflict divorce
3. Mediation as a dominant model does not work
4. We need to study the power dynamics more profoundly: the masks, the professional biases and the reference group to see what is going on in reality
5. Professionals in the Netherlands have insufficient evidence-based knowledge of high conflict divorce (De Ruiter, 2015)
6. The planet metaphor (Hester) cannot solve the contradictions in the system
7. We can learn from (stuck) cases and fatal violence
8. Advice for professionals, the audience and women in the situation of high conflict divorce: face fear and find courage
9. Based on Hester, we need to ask every time who does what to whom!!!

